

# Bard

Bard College  
**Bard Digital Commons**

---

Robert Kelly Manuscripts

Robert Kelly Archive

---

3-2010

marE2010

Robert Kelly  
*Bard College*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts)

---

## Recommended Citation

Kelly, Robert, "marE2010" (2010). *Robert Kelly Manuscripts*. Paper 484.  
[http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk\\_manuscripts/484](http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/rk_manuscripts/484)

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Robert Kelly Archive at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Robert Kelly Manuscripts by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

# Bard

**89.**

A woman always knows doesn't she  
the man who stands looking at her quiet

it was spring and a finch out there  
how many changes can the eye take in

I sat here in sun and thought about nothing  
crows started calling and I thought about crows

the spring is early my face hot in sun  
my bare feet cold in wind I am everything again

to be alive at all is the primal contradiction  
to be but be alive

being is thingish being should be static unchanging

where did this life-thing come from

this frail restlessness that woke the stone

and made the sea grow legs and climb the rock?

18 March 2010

## A PALINODE

1.

We match the days with virtues  
even-handed as a bird aloft  
that has no justice but the wind  
we also own—

forgive me, Orpheus,

I have not gone down enough.

2.

And when I brought them back  
wife after wife I did not turn  
in time to make them mine  
so they went and entered the dance

you call it I call it the city  
where they belong,  
we belong  
to other people and with luck  
good fortune Tyche at  
last to themselves.

Their own wives! Song  
for its own sake and none to save.

3.

Hence the hap of my apology  
haplology

this thing I say just once

and then again.

19 March 2010



= = = = =

They all need rescue

not numbers

need a strange weed

a healing simple

a thing to look at

brings them home.

19 March 2010

= = = = =

I need more than I can argue

I press clay with my stylus

but no letter comes—

darlings you were born before the alphabet

all you are is a shirt someone can take off.

19 March 2010



## COUNTING

Everything has to be counted here  
the constantly changing sum displayed

old movie house marquee  
over what is now a Pentecostal chapel  
on the west side of the square where General Locaux  
once stood arms raised on a tall tribune  
declaring the birth of the Seventh Republic  
or was it the eighth.

Everything has to be counted that is the rule,  
just as every king has a number  
so you must have one too,  
you in your ordinary clothes and not even a hat.

19 March 2010

## ***MONSTRUM***

A monster is something worth looking at—  
when did a noteworthy thing become an evil one  
words fuck us over all the time  
ladies and gentlemen of the jury  
and all I dare call to your attention  
is the size of the human hand, so much smaller  
than the foot or the head. We are still  
not ready to do our real work in the world  
at full volume, we lisp and whisper,  
we break for lunch now and never come back.  
We are not ready to be. The case is closed.

19 March 2010



## SAN GIUSEPPE

The feast of need.

I lent

my wife to a bird

and this is what he said:

The child is yours

and no one's, that means everyone's.

Handle it—you're strong

where it counts

I wonder where that is

or where I am. The things

people tell you

about yourself,

the terrible

accuracies that nail me down.

Why can't I be nobody

again, the way a bird...?

19 March 2010

= = = = =

alliance asylum meet me

the ordinary agent answers

candleflame without wick

wait me oriflamme announce

agency (blue) succor alliance

midworth mollitude or again

now and then the overcast

these days are dragons here

19 March 2010, Hopson

= = = = =

Tigerstriped snowfield

brown strips where the earth shows through

warmer there,

what grew there where the earth is bare,

its heat still part of the field?

mid-February

(20 March 2010)



## FILL THE ABATTOIRS

with cabbages, shed

green blood for once

for me but do it

reverently,

earth means them too

those slowest animals,

silly turnips, grave

barley with long beards,

each grain a blueprint of God.

end-February

(20 March 2010)

90.

Looking for all the wood that used to know me

I find a glass full of permanent milk

one more mystery one more lion asleep under a tree

roots are hidden so we don't notice where they come from

almost everything in the world is too far away

stretch out along the broad marble balustrade

we are the part of the stone that learned levity

stand up arise is always part of a relationship

we do not stand up for ourselves

we stand up only for thee

I wasn't moving fast enough to think

the sun was coming up what was a woman to do

*David con unas tijeras cortò las cuerdas de su arpa*

all life after looking for the hips whence rose his psalm

we are born with scissors in the hand

any moment can cut off what we are given

never fall silent till silence has a voice of its own

a voice you can trust no matter whose mouth

I am the permanent irregular the monster on the ice

it is so much pleasure to do everything at all

but how can you break a rule you don't know

a praise of learning without lore no love

without stuff in mindhoard no spunk in bone

he spoke in that patriarchal way

as if memorizing something made it true

all memory does is make it yours

whether or not anything was ever yours to begin with

*mens latrans* the mind that steals the weather

and makes a permanent image of it a god

Tiepolo tore down the actual sky.

20 March 2010

## STARLINGS

Hoofbeats of birds on the roof  
their yellow beaks are blades too  
cut the silence of morning  
then the shadows of them fly away  
over the grass coming out of its doze  
I suspect they pry into the roof moss  
searching for life forms beneath my notice  
till some day the roof caves in  
and we share communion with the sky.

20 March 2010

= = = = =

Should I disturb them at their work  
as if I were an animal  
and everything I can reach belongs to me?

## 20.III.10

There is something wonderful too about the sense of ownership; while it argues selfishness and greed, it also accepts the limitation - that not everything we can grab is ours to grab. Paradox: our grasping and possessiveness is actually on the road to altruism, far ahead, when we are confident enough in our possession that we can give away.

## **ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW**

The new is always good.

The news is always bad.

21 March 2010



means the head direct to the legs

*nous marchons avec Dieu*

means the hands direct to the sex

the two ways of making

using the body

in its ways

Man does all he does

to keep from his becoming.

These are edicts from dream

I have posted on the hard stone

stela of the day,

carving words into the air

breath knife



gouge of guesswork

poetry is trying to break the unwritten law.

21 March 2010

## WACHET AUF

### *Variations for Bach's birthday*

Now that I have done with waking

let me wake

Now let them be

no person is ever speaking only

to the spoken to

or let every

person be the ear of God

all the variations are on that

the tune at harborside

the Portuguese girls, the quote

from Pessoa facing the cars and the sky

the little ship that goes nowhere

to an island with a hill

where on a clear day

you can see the land you're standing on

personless and free

personhood is a bad part of town

where all the trees belong to people

wake speaking, woke inside the voice

that's calling you

be the voice that wakes the rest of you

only when they're all awake

will you know who you are

And don't give them sermons for breakfast  
unless they can dance around the church  
eating bread and wine the farmers bring  
hugging each other and letting go  
then stuff themselves on song

all posturing anyhow is deity  
the clothes in the shop window  
waiting for your flesh  
to put each other on

warm to be worn  
and music's always sad  
always the row of tones  
born to fade away  
'secular decay'

we love music because it dies for us

and we forgive our sins as it dies away

Wake sprightly

into being gone

when there's nothing left of you to be

then just be

the girl by the harbor

you never saw her face

the smoke from her cigarette

breathed out into sea mist

you called out

in a small voice

thinking maybe she was someone you knew

or would come to know

on the last day of all

when the music ends.

Or when it finally exists.

21 March 2010

= = = = =

Snoop news at blue hour fortune  
upcast the wind skirt see see the matter  
or marbled virago pale with moon she  
noontime czardas chill in the cloud  
silks--as if she were the orchardess  
or sat in any fountain at easily  
peace a-nod in bubbling ark.

21 March 2010